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September 30, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JE Fielding MD*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **EARLY CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION (FIRST 5 LA) GRANT
UPDATE**

This is in response to the September 18, 2012 Board motion instructing the Department of Public Health (DPH) to provide a plan and annual updates for the First 5 LA Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative's implementation and goal setting processes, timelines, spending allocation for each Service Planning Area (SPAs), key partners, communication plan, and contact information for program coordinators. This report provides the first annual update on this initiative.

The Department of Public Health was granted a four-year, \$41-million award from First 5 LA in 2012 with the goal of reducing the prevalence of overweight and obesity among young children and their families. The Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative (ECOPI) is bringing together a broad range of partners to implement community-based public education, skills-building and environmental changes to promote physical activity and healthy eating among the nearly one million Los Angeles County children ages 0-5 and their families. The initiative focuses on child care settings, community interventions, and interconception care, as follows:

- **Child Care Settings:** DPH is working with partners to improve nutrition and physical activity environments and expand upon a previous study to improve nutrition and physical activity policies and practices. The Eat, Play, Grow curriculum will increase child care providers' knowledge about nutrition and physical activity, focus on policy development and implementation, and change eating and physical activity patterns among children in child care.
- **Community Intervention:** DPH is working to implement intensive public education and skills-building supported by environmental changes that will expand current efforts to promote healthy eating and physical activity in the County. Key partners in these efforts are community agencies, medical care providers and the private sector, including grocery stores. Activities are also leveraging other grant-funded efforts, including the Community Transformation Grant, to establish a voluntary public recognition program for restaurants that provide healthy options for children and reduced portion sizes for adults.

- Interconception Care: DPH is addressing overweight during the interconception period, the critical time between the end of one pregnancy and the beginning of the next one. Resources and individual support will be provided to mothers in the areas of nutrition, physical activity and stress reduction. Resources will be incorporated into curriculums for use by community-based organizations and health plans, and will also be provided in an online platform.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the ECOPI is to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity among young children and their families, by empowering them to select healthy foods and beverages and increase physical activity. This goal supports the First 5 LA 2009-2015 Strategic Plan Goal: *Children Maintain a Healthy Weight*. The following actions will be implemented as part of this funding:

- Partner with the Department of Children and Family Services, other County departments and public agencies, and community and faith-based organizations to provide nutrition and physical activity education and resources to families with children ages 0-5, in at least 20 cities and/or unincorporated communities with childhood obesity rates above the county average.
- Commission a report outlining local strategies to reduce food marketing to young children and implement at least one of the recommended strategies countywide or in sub-county regions with childhood obesity rates above the county average.
- Provide nutrition education and skills-building to parents and other care providers of children ages 0-5 in at least 40 grocery stores or markets, including grocery stores or markets located in at least 20 cities or unincorporated communities with childhood obesity rates above the county average.
- Implement at least three countywide media and targeted social marketing campaigns aimed at families and caregivers of children ages 0-5 that include tailored and culturally appropriate messages promoting specific nutrition and physical activity-related behaviors (e.g., increased fruit and vegetable consumption, reduced sugary beverage consumption, and reduced screen time) among children ages 0-5.
- Implement menu changes that expand healthful children's meal menu options in at least 100 restaurants, including restaurants located in at least 20 cities or unincorporated communities with childhood obesity rates above the county average.
- Implement obesity prevention protocols for children ages 0-5 that include routine body mass index measurement and tracking, nutrition and physical activity education, and more intensive case management for overweight, obese, or other at-risk children in at least 30 public or community clinics in the county.
- Enhance nutrition and physical activity environments through adoption of improved policies and practices in at least 6,000 licensed and license exempt child care providers in the County.

- Develop and implement an online weight management toolkit for postpartum women in Los Angeles County; provide in-person and online recorded training to at least 80 community-based agencies that serve postpartum women on how to incorporate the toolkit into their organization; and promote the toolkit through the distribution of printed materials, social media, partner organizations, and the website.

An evaluation plan is being developed with First 5 LA to ensure that all program components achieve their intended impact on increasing the knowledge of parents, improving the diets of young children and creating healthier environments.

Timeline and Progress to Date

The grant period is July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2016. During Year One, DPH worked to build the initiative administrative infrastructure, hired new staff, developed partnerships, and conducted literature reviews, community assessments and key informant interviews. Responsibilities of the new staff include oversight of programmatic activities and communication with Area Health Offices, Community Liaisons and other SPA-based staff, and community partners regarding activities, events and public participation opportunities. In addition, DPH has completed or has started the following activities:

- Executed two sole-source contracts. The first sole-source contract with the Child Care Resource Center was executed in February 2013 to offer nutrition and physical activity workshops and technical assistance to child care providers countywide. A second sole-source contract with Change Lab Solutions was executed in February 2013 to develop a report outlining local strategies to reduce unhealthy food marketing to young children.
- Initiated a partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services to develop strategies to promote Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) services and resources and areas for collaboration. Ten scholarships were provided for Department of Children and Family Services case workers and nurses to attend the 6th Biannual Childhood Obesity Conference in Long Beach in June 2013.
- Conducted four focus groups in June 2013 to help inform the development of three countywide public education campaigns.
- Released a competitive Request for Proposals to support community education activities in July with a due date of September 20, 2013. Contracts will begin in January 2014. Activities will be implemented in all SPAs and will prioritize low-income communities with large numbers of young children and high rates of childhood obesity.
- Implemented a pilot project in four clinic sites to improve childhood obesity case management in collaboration with the Community Health Alliance of Pasadena. The pilot project includes working with clinic staff to improve protocols for screening/measurement and counseling. A resource guide that lists local breastfeeding/nutrition, physical activity and weight loss programs is also being developed for use by clinical providers to support case management.
- Curriculum development for the nutrition and breastfeeding, physical activity and stress management components of the post-partum program have begun and a consultant was hired to develop the evaluation platform. More than twenty-five physician-groups, health plans, and other organizations have already expressed an interest in participating in the post-partum pilot.

- Development of a voluntary restaurant program to give customers the option to choose a smaller portion size and healthier children's meals. More than 40 key informant interviews with national, regional and local partners were conducted. Interviews included public health leaders, restaurant owners and community members. Criteria for program participation have been developed for children's meals and include healthier default options for beverages, inclusion of fruits and vegetables as side items, and reduction of deep fried kids' menu options. Program enrollment has begun.

Geographic Target Areas, Key Partners, and Communications Plan

The Initiative's goal for program reach and funding distribution is to engage partners across all SPAs in the County, while meeting the funding guidelines that require the Initiative activities to target families with children 0-5. Priority will be given to communities that have: 1) a large number or high percentage of children 0-5; 2) childhood obesity rates that exceed the County average, and 3) a large number or high percentage of households with incomes less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.

The DPH plans to build upon its already extensive network of partner organizations in the community. ECOPI will provide capacity building support for these organizations and the communities they serve, enabling them to carry on this work beyond the life of the grant. ECOPI will complement other efforts currently taking place around Los Angeles County, including other First 5-funded programs, WIC services, and programs supported by Kaiser Permanente, The California Endowment, and other local, state, and federal funders. A Steering Committee comprised of key partners has been established to serve the project in an advisory capacity. These partners include, but are not limited to, nutrition and physical activity researchers, academics and other content-area specialists; community service provider's representatives from First 5 LA and other First 5 initiatives; the Department of Children and Family Services and other County Departments; health insurance providers; medical providers; and members of the business community.

Funding announcements, events, activities, and public participation opportunities are being communicated through several channels, including County websites (publichealth.lacounty.gov, ChooseHealthLA.com), existing First 5 LA infrastructure, listservs (e.g., Los Angeles Collaborative for Healthy Active Children, DPH's HealthEd), Area Health Office networks, email announcements, and at community, coalition and collaborative meetings.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:sb
PH:1209:012

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors